



Dear EMS Services and providers:

Thank you for your dedication during these trying times. We have had an environment that is continuously changing over the past few weeks, and I wanted to take a moment to send out some reminders and some new information.

- **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):** Please remember to wear appropriate PPE with your patients to protect yourself. This may include, but is not limited to, surgical masks, N95 masks, gowns, gloves, and face shields/eye protection. I know many of you are running short or may not have any. DHHS is working on trying to get supplies out to local Health Departments. Information on who you should contact can be found here <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx>. To request supplies please contact your local Health Department to get the proper forms. *NOTE: This process will be changing to put these forms online.*
- **PPE FOR EVERY PATIENT:** The Department is recommending the use of facemasks on all patient encounters. Please consider the following:
 - **FACEMASK:** CDC has recommended facemasks as an acceptable alternative to N95s due to the shortage. Facemasks can be worn for one entire shift or until it is soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through. Ensure when you remove the mask you perform hand hygiene.
 - **N95:** N95 masks may be reused if following proper procedures and if your agency has a shortage of N95 masks. CDC guidance is one strategy to mitigate the contact transfer of pathogens from the Filtering Facepiece Respirator (FFR) to the wearer during reuse is to issue five respirators to each healthcare worker who may care for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
 - **CDC Decon and reuse for filtering facepiece respirator guidance:**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/decontamination-reuse-respirators.html>.
- **AEROSOL-GENERATING PROCEDURES:** An N95 and all other PPE should be used if you perform these procedures; however, the Department is encouraging the use of Metered Dose Inhalers rather than performing nebulized breathing treatments. **Please consult your Physician Medical Director prior to making this change.** Note: anticipate shortages in the supply chain.
- **COVID-19 NON-TRANSPORT PROTOCOL:** We have added a new protocol for non-transport of patients. Dr. Ernest, the statewide EMS Physician Medical Director for the Office of Emergency Health Systems, and the Board of Emergency Medical Services protocol review committee have approved this policy. This protocol includes a decision tree for EMS providers to follow with the last two pages meant to be left with the patient. The protocol can be found here <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/EHS-Emergency-Medical-Services.aspx>. As always, please get this protocol approved by your own physician medical director prior to moving forward with this protocol.
- **PRIORITY TESTING:** First responders have priority testing through the Nebraska Public Health Lab for a clinical or rule-out diagnosis of COVID-19. This information is elaborated on in the following HAN <http://dhhs.ne.gov/han%20Documents/ADVISORY04022020.pdf>. In order to expedite this we are asking for your help:

- Please **UPDATE** your EMS Service Rosters in eNARSIS immediately. We are asking for this because these rosters include licensed and non-licensed staff from your service. This information will be used to help prioritize your EMS Service staff for testing.
- EMS Services who use third party vendors to import into eNARSIS should ensure that their EMS staffing list is also updated in eNARSIS as required by regulation. If you have questions on how to do this please contact DHHS.eNARSIShelp@nebraska.gov or your Regional EMS Specialist.
- **eNARSIS:** Over the next few days you will see some changes to eNARSIS. These changes are going to require services to fill out PPE worn by each person on a run. Additionally, there will be changes to questions and the addition of questions to collect on all patients to help determine if we should suspect a patient of COVID-19 or not. I know none of us want to collect more but this data will be imperative on helping track the infection.
- **EXECUTIVE ORDERS:** Governor Pete Ricketts has issued Executive Order 20-10 which has set aside some licensure requirements during this time of emergency. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document <http://dhhs.ne.gov/OEHS%20Program%20Documents/EMS%20EO%2020-10%20FAQ.pdf>. If you have any questions regarding any licensing requirements please contact us at DHHS.EMSLicensing@nebraska.gov.
- **EMS EDUCATION:** More information will be coming regarding EMS education and testing.

The Office of Emergency Health Systems will be hosting a webinar on Tuesday, April 14 at 3:00 pm CST and 2:00 pm MST.

Web Link: <https://nvcn-cio.webex.com/nvcn-cio/j.php?MTID=mc8786345a9018f676ae77061986fd494>

Meeting number: 497 416 760

Password: COvid19

Please submit any specific questions or concerns you would like to see answered by 5:00 pm April 13, 2020 by emailing them to DHHS.EMSLicensing@nebraska.gov.

Any information the Office of Emergency Health Systems puts out can be found on our webpage at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/ems>. You can also get information from our Facebook @NEBEHS (Nebraska Emergency Health Systems) and Twitter @NEDHHS_EHS (Office of Emergency Health Systems). To receive regular updates by our newsletter please sign up at <http://eepurl.com/gehPjb>.

Thank you for your continued dedication during these trying times. Please feel free to reach out to myself or to your Regional EMS Specialist if you need anything or have questions.

Stay Safe!



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